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# CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



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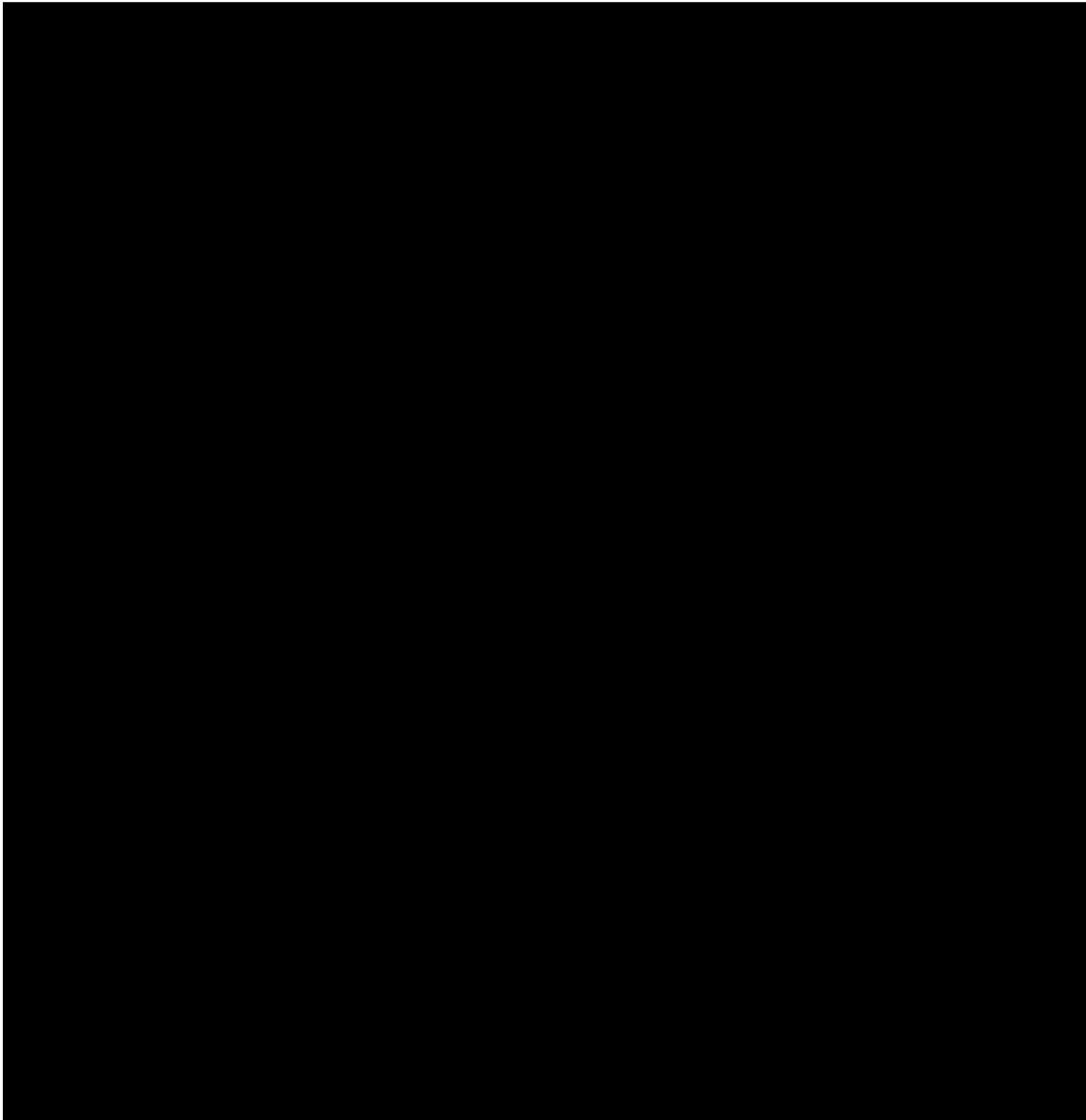
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THE WEEK IN BRIEF  
(Information as of 1200 EST 28 Dec)



MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS . . . . . Page 8

The new 16-member Syrian cabinet is a weak one, and even if it receives a vote of confidence at the next meeting of parliament in early January, its life is likely to be short.

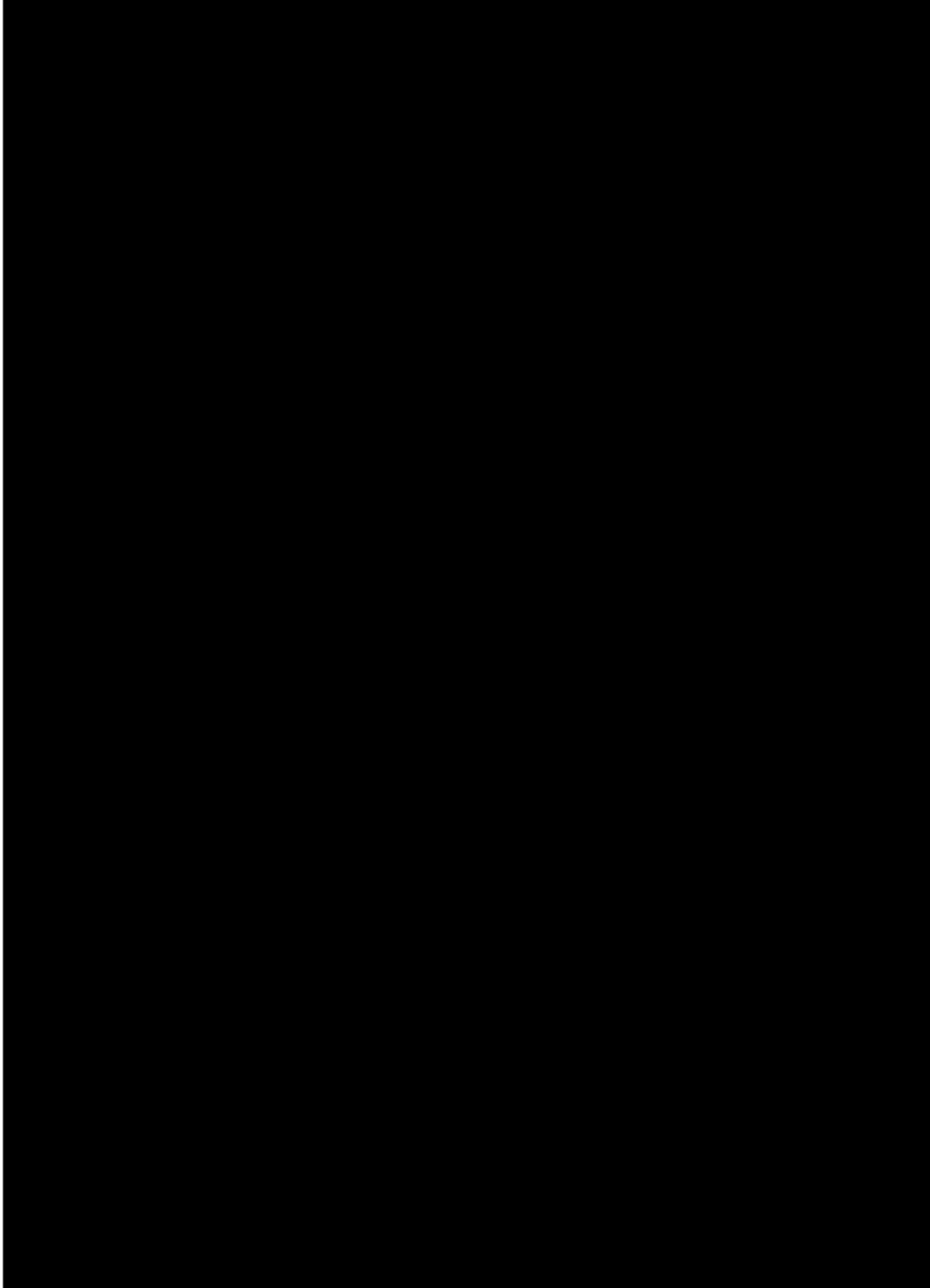


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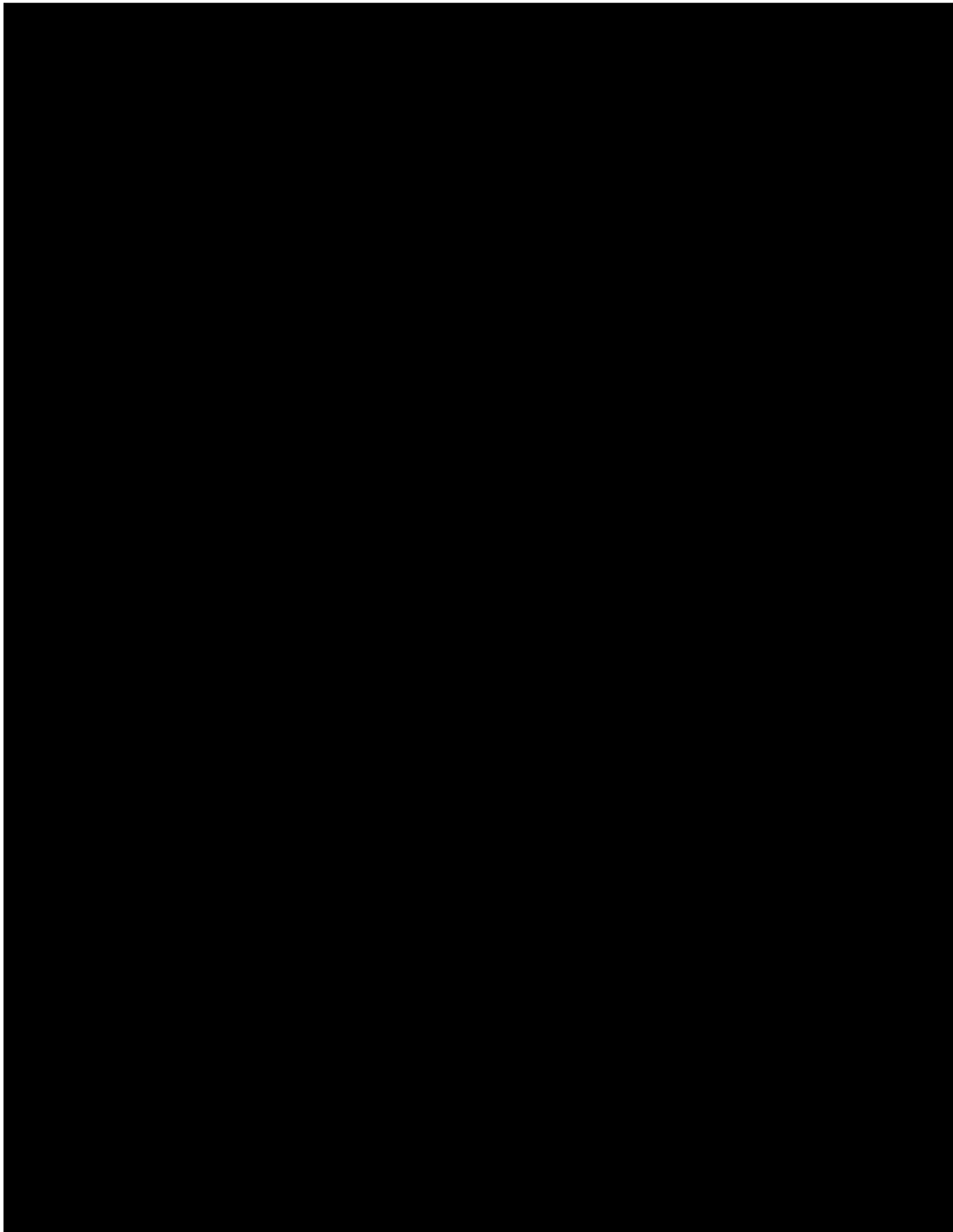


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MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

Syria

After a week's delay, Maruf al-Dawalibi, a leader of the left wing of the moderately conservative Populist party, formed a 16-man cabinet which is the product of considerable compromise. Consisting of second-rate politicians, the new cabinet includes rightists and leftists but leaves out representatives of the important Nationalist party as well as the most influential leftist leaders. Many ministers appear to be miscast--an Alawi tribal chieftain is minister of communications; the Ministry of Justice is headed by a professor of Moslem law who is a member of the reactionary Moslem Brotherhood; and the minister of culture's only claim to expertise is his status as an amateur poet.

Given the omission of representation of a number of leading parliamentary political figures, the cabinet may not get a vote of confidence from parliament when it meets again in early January. In any case, the cabinet's life is likely to be short.

Apparently cooperation between the Populist and Nationalist parties already has broken down, less than a month after the parliamentary elections. While the cabinet includes five Populists, none but Dawalibi are men of stature in the party, and several Populist leaders refused to participate because they were not given the port-

folios they wanted. Thus the hostility which has flared up frequently since 1949 between the Populist and Nationalist parties, as well as disagreement within the Populist party itself, appears to be preventing the cooperation which would be essential for a conservative Syrian grouping to prevail in the face of relatively well-organized leftists.

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